

## CISH Congress Session, Jinan, “Commodifying Home Labor: Domestic Work Over Time” (Deadline: Nov. 30)

Posted on August 20, 2013 by Rosemary Feurer

### **ST 28 “Commodifying Home Labor: Domestic Work Over Time” (Specialized theme).**

Cooking, cleaning, and caring are not naturally the work of women, but rather emerged as central components of household labor assigned to most women and to men from subordinate groups. This specialized theme historicizes the development of home labor. It asks: who does domestic labor, what are its components, and how does domestic labor relate to structures of production and reproduction within and beyond the household in various places and over time? It will consider the movement of such labor from unpaid to paid work, from home to other spaces (such as public and private institutional settings like hospitals and child care centers and for-profit companies for cleaning and food) and back to the home with the expansion of “the maid trade” and increase in the labor force participation of women who require others to perform home labors. It also will address the various forms that social or political movements, transnationally as well as within nations, have taken to improve the conditions of such labor, both for the housewife and those who perform domestic work for pay, such as home economics, cooperatives, labor standards, and unionization. What alternatives to the private organization of such work were proposed or attempted? What impact has feminist thought and practice had on home labors? The goal is to continue the historical conversation through crossing boundaries of intellectual, social, cultural, and political history, integrating women’s and gender, ethnic/race, and labor history, to understand the development of power and inequality in ways that connect the micro and intimate to the national and global.

This session seeks both case studies and broad theoretical and interpretative work from all periods and places, including ancient societies, colonial contexts, under slavery and industrialization, and in different economic systems, including Communism and Neo-liberalism.

Organizer:

Eileen Boris

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**Proposals** should be a maximum of 2500 characters – 350 words and **should be sent with a short biographical note to the organizers and to the Secretary General Robert Frank: [sgcish1@gmail.com](mailto:sgcish1@gmail.com)** by the **30th November 2013**.

## Author



[Rosemary Feurer](#)

Rosemary Feurer is Professor of History at Northern Illinois University. She is the author of *Radical Unionism in the Midwest, 1900-1950*, among other books and essays. She is working on *The Illinois Mine Wars, 1860-1940* and a new biography of Mary Harris "Mother" Jones.